

The revisions below reflect three things: combining all MCCS grant policies into one set of supplemental guidelines; aligning the sequence of commission expectations with the commission's policy requiring development of a business plan for sustainability; clarifying the timing for program evaluations and the use of those evaluations in funding decisions; and changing the support schedule to reflect planning grants as well as use of the final grant period funds.

National Service Funding In Maine

Supplemental Guidelines for Grant Programs

Maine Commission for Community Service

Among the responsibilities of the Maine Commission for Community Service are duties related to granting Maine's funds for national community service programs (AmeriCorps*USA and Community-based Learn and Serve America K-12) from the Corporation for National Service. The grant guidelines for awarding funds to States are developed at the federal level but state commissions are ~~urged~~ required to ~~consider local conditions~~ establish state funding priorities, incorporate state laws and Commission policies into grant-making activities, and employ a performance contracting framework that is subsequently used as the basis for monitoring performance, awarding funds, and providing technical assistance in their planning as well as program funding decisions. The ~~local issues~~ state-specific priorities, expectations of grantees, and other policies are then ~~integrated into~~ melded with the federal grant application guidelines ~~as to create~~ "State Specific Application Guidelines".

The Guidelines below were first developed in July 1997, ~~and~~ They were revised in September 1999 and October 2002. They represent the ~~state specific~~ grant guidelines of the Maine Commission for Community Service that, together with State of Maine contracting rules, which will be edited are joined into with the full application guidance ~~for from any~~ CNS funding opportunities that may arise to create "Requests for Proposals" or "Notice(s) of Funding Availability."

General Guidelines

1. State formula funds for AmeriCorps*~~USA~~ crew programs will underwrite at least three proposals, regardless of the total amount allotted to Maine.
2. ~~2.~~ Applications must be developed by regional or local coalitions that build on existing cooperative efforts to address community needs or draw new partners together in a manner that extends the capacity to impact local needs.
3. All applicants for funds will be asked to ~~develop~~ submit a projected annual budgets as well as service impact and community strengthening outcomes for the entire three-year grant period.
 - a. Annual workplans will be used to describe the strategies and outputs that move programs toward accomplishment of their outcome objectives. Applicants for funding will be asked to submit their first year's work plan with the initial proposal and subsequent work plans with succeeding funding requests (years two and three).
 - b. Budgets will need to and demonstrate a reasonable expectation the local matching funds can be obtained from the community. The submitted three-year budget will determine the funding levels for all three years except that funds awarded in years 2 and 3 of a grant period may be increased or decreased by the commission based on either performance or Congressional appropriations.

3. ~~Applications must be developed by regional partnerships that build on existing cooperative efforts or draw new partners together in a manner which doesn't duplicate efforts in the region.~~
2. ~~4.~~ Grants will be selected with sensitivity to geographic distribution but geography will not be a deciding factor in making awards.
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3. Successful applicants who propose to implement new AmeriCorps programs (i.e., programs that have not previously operated and do not meet the definition of "recompeting") will be evaluated on their sustainability progress according to the Commission's criteria (adopted June 1998) as outlined below.

YEAR ONE (no prior National service operation)

Expectations:

- a. Implement personnel, fiscal, administrative, and reporting systems to achieve compliance with National service grant provisions.
- b. Establish positive, effective working relationships with partners in grant and service delivery.
- c. Accomplish the objectives described for year one community service, member development and community strengthening objectives.
- d. Establish a recognized presence in the community through public education and outreach.
- e. Implement a basic continuous quality improvement system to monitor community satisfaction with service and program's ability to meet the identified need.
- f. Lay a solid foundation for sustainable service through periodic citizen involvement in service activities, meeting local match in a timely manner, and development of a committee or advisory board that brings together the partners, service beneficiaries, and other stakeholders for the purpose of guiding program implementation.
- g. Catalogue lessons learned in the first year of operation and reflect them in proposed plans for year two.

YEAR TWO

Expectations:

- h. Fully implement impact and quantitative evaluation whose results are communicated to stakeholders, used as guidance in current year service work, and demonstrably inform third year service objectives.
- i. Demonstrate a commitment to quality service through staff development and strong working relationships with grant partners.
- j. With involvement of the program advisory committee, develop a business plan to sustain service effort that diversifies and extends partnerships with service stakeholders (service beneficiaries, volunteers, funders, and service delivery collaborators).
- k. Assess the status of program volunteer management system and its ability to recruit as well as support increased citizen involvement in program's core service activities.
- l. Accomplish community service, member development, and community strengthening objectives in a manner that gives local volunteers a meaningful role, develops an ethic of service among members, reflects community feedback about service, coordinates with other national service programs, and provides specific evidence through evaluation that activities are having the intended effect.
- m. Demonstrate community support of program activities and local awareness of impact on community needs through community attention to, involvement in, and awareness of the program.
- n. Increase likelihood of sustainability through strengthened financial support that includes increased diversity in funding sources and early (by end of first quarter) written commitments of underwriters to provide match funds.
- o. Catalog lessons learned in year two and relate those lessons to both proposed Year 3 plans and future sustainability.
- p. During final quarter (to be completed in time for reapplication, if program opts to compete for a new grant), conduct an evaluation of program quality, impact, and operations that addresses not only issues of interest to the program but also those issues identified by CNCS as its areas of evaluative interest.

YEAR THREE

Expectations:

- q. With advisory body, implement business plan and track progress.
- r. Develop and implement plan to strengthen program's volunteer management system so it is capable of supporting citizen involvement in core service work in a manner that reflects best professional practice in the volunteer field.
- s. Engage in self-assessment of lessons learned, conclusions of evaluation and continuous quality improvement system, impact on community, opportunities to extend or increase partnerships in order to meet community needs, and stakeholder opinions of local priorities in order to develop an action plan for the post-grant period.

- t. Operate an effective internal and external communication system that provides all stakeholders with information they need -- including evidence of program effectiveness and quality -- and educates potential partners or stakeholders.
- u. Demonstrate strong community ownership through significant involvement of citizens in service work, written commitments of funders to provide match on a scheduled basis each quarter, positive working relationships with media and stakeholders.
- 2. An AmeriCorps program that submits a proposal as a recompeting program will be required to submit both an evaluation of its operation and performance as well as a sustainability (business) plan. The business plan should address the following elements:
 - a. Development of Community Partnerships (new or enhanced)
 - b. Strengthened role and support of community via Oversight or Advisory Boards that include service beneficiaries
 - c. Assessment of changes in community needs or conditions and a means for determining the program's continued relevance as well as how well the program is contributing to meeting community needs or improving conditions.
 - d. Expansion or enhancement of volunteer base in order to increase sustainability and/or increase service capacity
 - e. Successful access of additional funding that will lead to reduction or elimination of need for federal CNCS monies
 - f. Fostering growth or enhancement of operations that leads to continued program expansion
 - g. Effective communication with citizens that continues to build community awareness of program services and impact

General Expectations of Applicants:

All applicants for grants from MCCS are expected to ~~They~~ propose a service activity that is ...

1. consistent with the vision and mission of the Commission thus furthering the realization of both those cornerstones.
2. consistent with the sponsoring organization's mission;
3. presented with full commitment of the sponsor and fully informed commitment of partnering entities;
4. the result of an genuine, inclusive proposal development process that allowed the community to determine what solutions would meet the need identified;
5. from partners who share the Commission's belief in the value of community service and volunteer efforts;
6. designed from the beginning to generate non-national service volunteers, develop a local capacity to meet the identified need through volunteers' service after AmeriCorps, and develop financial resources at a level which will ultimately sustain the activity without CNCS federal funds.

The Commission will consider eligible only those applicant proposals ...

1. are submitted by a partnership or coalition of local organizations;
2. that demonstrate the skills needed to implement the project (fiscal, volunteer management, documentation, connection to customers, grant management) exist among the partners or coalition members. are
3. that address a need which falls into one of the Commission's priority areas for funding and which has been identified, through a genuine process of community-based needs assessment and project design, as priority in the geographic area to be served;

4. that demonstrate a commitment to continuous quality improvement and achieving high quality results through development and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation plan that encompasses service activities, member development, community impact, and program development;
5. contain a plan to involve non-national service volunteers in the core efforts of the project from the first year and integrate those volunteers in a manner which reflects best practice in volunteer management;
6. demonstrate inclusion of all segments of the community;
7. outline a plan for sustainability beyond national service funding which has a reasonable expectation of being realized;
8. will be guided or advised throughout implementation by a group of citizens who represent the communities served and, in particular, citizens whose needs are being met by the project;
9. outline a plan for making the community aware of the contributions national service is making to addressing community needs and the role the Commission plays as funding and capacity building partner;
10. contains a projected budget for 3 years that (a) reflects the Commission's ~~changing~~ support from schedule of federal (CNCS) funds

Recompetition of Previously Funded Programs

A program may ~~receive a cumulative total of nine years of CNS funding through~~ be funded for operating through the State grants process for up to four grant periods. Those ~~nine years~~ grant periods may be any combination of formula or competitive funds. The Commission will determine at each open competition, whether a recompetiting application is to be supported for funding.

If a previously funded program ~~applies~~ applies for subsequent three-year grants, it will be required to:

1. Describe as part of the application how it has met the Commission expectations ~~(e.g., sustainability)~~ related to sustainability or implementation of its business plan during the completed three-year grant period.
2. Submit an evaluation of performance ~~in that addresses~~ that addresses the areas of service activity, member development, and community impact and meets any CNCS requirements for evaluation considerations.

The ~~description of how a program has met Commission expectations for grantees~~ report on sustainability and/or business plan implementation progress as well as the evaluation ~~of performance~~ will be included in the ~~evaluation rating~~ evaluation rating criteria and reviewer assessment process that ~~identifies strong proposals to be considered for funding~~ culminates in selection of proposals for funding. In addition, profiles of re-competing programs will be supplied to reviewers and the Commission. These profiles will outline data on prior performance and, at a minimum, describe member enrollment and retention rates, as well as compliance with grant regulations and match requirements.

A program that elects to compete for a operating funds second three-year grant must submit a budget that reflects a ratio of 40% CNS and 60% local match for the entire three-year grant period. A program that chooses to compete a third time must submit a budget that restricts any request for funds to 50% of the AmeriCorps Member Living Allowance section (Section A in 1999 Budgets).

At the point when a program ~~has received a cumulative nine years~~ reaches the end of its eligibility for ~~of~~ CNCS operating funding through State grants, (or on any recompeting cycle) it may elect to:

- ~~1. Not apply to be an AmeriCorps program~~
- ~~2. A~~ apply as an AmeriCorps Education Award Program, with or without a request for the administrative funds that may be awarded with such grants.

Specific Proposal Criteria

~~The applicant proposals ...~~

- ~~1. are submitted by a partnership of local organizations;~~
- ~~2. demonstrate that among the partners are the skills needed to implement the project (fiscal, volunteer management, documentation, connection to customers, grant management);~~
- ~~3. address a need which falls into one of the Commission's priority areas for funding and which has been identified, through a genuine process of community-based needs assessment and project design, as priority in the geographic area to be served;~~
- ~~4. demonstrate a commitment to continuous quality improvement and achieving high quality results through development and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation plan that encompasses service activities, member development, community impact, and program development;~~
- ~~5. contain a plan to involve non-national service volunteers in the core efforts of the project from the first year and integrate those volunteers in a manner which reflects best practice in volunteer management;~~
- ~~6. demonstrate inclusion of all segments of the community;~~
- ~~7. outline a plan for sustainability beyond national service funding which has a reasonable expectation of being realized;~~
- ~~8. will be guided or advised throughout implementation by a group of citizens who represent the communities served and, in particular, citizens whose needs are being met by the project;~~
- ~~9. outline a plan for making the community aware of the contributions national service is making to addressing community needs and the role the Commission plays as funding and capacity-building partner;~~
- ~~10. contains a projected budget for 3 years that (a) reflects the changing support from federal funds;~~

Support Schedule for CNCS funds granted through M CCS

<i>Grant Cycle</i>	<i>First Year</i>	<i>Second Year</i>	<i>Third Year</i>
<u><i>New Program</i></u>	<u><i>Planning Grant</i></u> <u><i>67% CNCS share</i></u> <u><i>33% Local share</i></u>	<u><i>60% CNCS share</i></u> <u><i>40% Local match</i></u>	<u><i>60% CNCS share</i></u> <u><i>40% Local match</i></u>
<i>First Grant Period</i>	60% CNS share 40% Local match	50% CNS share 50% Local match	40 <u>50</u> % CNS share 60 <u>50</u> % Local match
<i>Second Grant Period</i>	40% CNS share 60% Local match	40% CNS share 60% Local match	40% CNS share 60% Local match
<i>Third Grant Period</i>	On AC Living Section only 50% CNS share 50% Local share	On AC Living Section only 50% CNS share 50% Local share	On AC Living Section only 50% CNS share 50% Local share

<u>Third Grant Period</u>	<u>CNS share set at flat rate and awarded per FTE. Rate to equal 50% of total cost for full-time member (stipend, health, and other costs on Section A of Budget).</u> <u>Min. 50% Local share. Local match section of budget must reflect resources sufficient to support the AmeriCorps members, deliver quality service, and achieve the community impact planned.</u>
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Example of Third Grant based on anticipated 2003 federal guidelines: \$7,000 per FTE would be CNCS share.